

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO

Abrar Zawed

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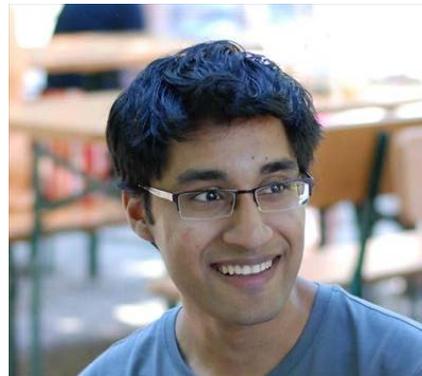
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Welcome!

My name is Abrar Zawed and I am an international student from Bangladesh attending Minnesota State University, Mankato. Currently, I am a senior majoring in Biomedical Sciences with minor in Chemistry. Upon completion of my undergraduate degree, I hope to continue my education by attending graduate school for a Ph.D. degree in Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine. My eventual goal is to pursue a career as a scientist and run my own lab at a major research university.

Mission Statement: I intend to remain active within the Honors Program and take advantage of every opportunity I get to enrich my leadership, research, and global citizenship skills through honors classes and participating in co-curricular activities that foster these competencies.

Thank you for browsing through my electronic portfolio. Please feel free to contact me with any question or to request additional information. I can be reached at abrar.zawed@mnsu.edu



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Minnesota State University, Mankato, MN



Currently, I am a senior at Minnesota State University, Mankato. My major is Biomedical Science with a minor in Chemistry. I expect to graduate in May 2015.

Government City College, Chittagong, Bangladesh



I completed my Higher Secondary School Certificate Examination from Govt. City College. I studied there for two years (2008-2010). I received a GPA of 5.00 (A⁺) in my Higher Secondary School Certificate Examination.

St. Placid's High School, Chittagong, Bangladesh



I was enrolled in St. Placid's High School, Bangladesh for eleven years (1997-2008). In school, I was involved in various co-curricular activities such as boy scout, debate, science fair, and seasonal sports. I received a GPA of 5.00 (A⁺) in my Secondary School Certificate Examination from the school.

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Honors Program

MSU Honors Program is designed to recruit motivated students around the campus and provide them with a learning atmosphere to develop three core competencies of the program, namely [leadership](#), [research](#), and [global citizenship](#). These three competencies are viewed as essential traits to be successful as a student, and more importantly as a model citizen in the society. Students in the program foster these competencies through participating in co-curricular activities and enrolling into Honors courses. Selected from a very talented pool of professors, the Honors faculty design their classes in such a way that allow students to develop the competencies through in-class discussions, presentation, and writing research and reflection paper.



Personal Reflection on the Honors Program

Since joining the Honors Program, my college experience has completely changed and I quickly realized that the Honors Program is a perfect fit for me to achieve all the goals that I set as a college student. It allowed me to enrich my college experience in a way that seemed impossible and unrealistic when I started college 4 years ago. As I look back, I see myself as a future [researcher](#) with a potential to be a good [leader](#) along with true [global citizenship](#) qualities. The Honors Program made a large portion of this development possible and I am forever grateful for the opportunity.

For more information on the Honors Program, please visit www.mnsu.edu/honors

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"Listen and Respond"

When I think about leadership, words that come to mind are *admirable, inspiring, courageous, honest, and approachable*. In reality, these words do not have any significance unless someone actually gains practical experience with leadership. That's why I always try to engage myself in leadership activities, which in turn allows me to identify my strengths and weaknesses as a leader. I've developed leadership experiences in a number of ways, including the classroom with [public speaking](#) and [Honors History](#) classes, and I've applied those skills while serving as a [student ambassador](#) and [peer mentor](#) beyond the classroom. Over the past several years, I've asked myself questions about my leadership style and experiences. Ultimately, I believe that leadership is about reflecting on successes and errors and, adapting for future situations.



I believe that leadership is all about making mistakes and correcting them. I am proud to say that I made mistakes in several occasions. Learning from mistakes is the most challenging part of leadership, but it is definitely something every leader should experience. As a leader, I try to figure out what went wrong and how I could improve, instead of losing hope while performing a leadership role. For example, while working as the [lead peer mentor](#) during international students' orientation, I considered my job as primarily managerial and task-orientated. This resulted in leadership conflict with my team members and created an unwanted distance in leader-follower relationships. I have realized over time that it was not the correct way to approach leadership, and I admitted my mistakes in front of everyone. This allowed me to not only gain the respect and trust of my team members, but also provided the opportunity to lead by example. So the most significant part of leadership is to demonstrate accountability, learning from mistakes, and build a solid relationship with team members.

I also believe that an effective leader listens first and then makes judgments. This leadership style matches my personality and values, and it has proven to be useful in my leadership career thus far. As a self-proclaimed introvert, I really feel proud of following the footsteps of some of the greatest leaders who have taken a similar approach. For example, in my [Honors History](#) class I read a biography of Mahatma Gandhi. While reading that book, I came across a story where Gandhi mentioned that his greatest strength lies in his ability to listen to others. Since then, I've taken advantage of my personality characteristics and adopted a similar approach. The "Listening to others" approach not only made a positive impression on my teammates, but also provided me the opportunity to learn from others' ideas.

Over the last four years, all the leadership experiences I have gained have enabled me to see leadership from different perspectives. These experiences have provided me with a platform to test my skills as a leader and have allowed me to identify my strengths and weaknesses in terms of leading a team. Furthermore, I have not only learned about the traits that all leaders should possess, but I am now also able to compare my leadership skills with others, which in turn has broadened my knowledge about leadership and allowed me to develop my own leadership philosophy.

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Research Reflection

When somebody asks me to define myself, the first thing that comes to mind is *researcher*. Being a researcher is much more than working in a laboratory and setting up experiments. For me, research is about developing a question that might help me to solve a problem, collecting and analyzing reliable information related to the issue, and finally disseminating the outcomes within a scholarly community for further investigation. As a biology major, a large part of my college career has been occupied by undergraduate research. During this time, I've developed my research skills in a number of ways, including in the [classroom](#) with my major related courses, and I have used those skills for practical application beyond the classroom by conducting an [undergraduate research project](#), completing a [research internship in Germany](#), and by presenting my research in various [conferences](#). I believe that excellent scientists must build a solid foundation for research and develop ways to share and collaborate findings within a scientific and scholarly community for practical application.



I believe that a solid foundation of scientific understanding is necessary to conduct research. I was really lucky to start my first undergraduate research project very early in college life. But with no prior knowledge of how research in my discipline works, I had to start from scratch. For the first few months, I learned about basic laboratory techniques like pipetting, prepping solutions, sterilization, and writing experimental protocols. Moreover, I learned about collecting research information from reliable sources like scientific journals and peer-reviewed articles, extracting and analyzing data in a meaningful way, and finally, using it for my own research project. This peer review process has allowed me to have better appreciation for scientific discoveries and broadened my view about research in general. As I progressed into my second and third years of research, gaining this solid foundation for research gave me all the confidence I needed to carry on more complicated and challenging projects like my [current research project](#). My foundation has allowed me to follow my intuition and curiosity towards research, and to conduct experiments even when it has seemed impossible to gain positive outcomes. Following my curiosity has helped me to achieve all the successes I have had so far and has later on become the core of my research philosophy.

I also believe that sharing and collaborating research within the scientific community is as important as conducting experiments inside laboratories. Considering the current wide array of scientific research, I have realized that collaborating with scientists across other disciplines is really important; connecting our ideas can help us to achieve bigger goals. For example, my [second undergraduate research project](#) largely focused on various molecular techniques such as DNA recombination and molecular cloning. During that time, none of these seem to have any hope of practical application in my life. But the techniques I learned for my undergraduate research has proven to be very valuable while [conducting research in Germany](#). There I designed several experiments that helped my group to better understand protein misfolding and looked for scientific explanations for previously unanswered questions. Sharing my ideas helped me to foster my creativity, achieve deeper understanding about research, and contribute towards scientific and scholarly community in a meaningful way.

I devoted a large part of my college life to undergraduate research. During this time, I developed my research skills by gaining knowledge inside the classroom; at the same time, I tried to use these skills for practical application outside the classroom. These experiences have allowed me to gain a solid foundation for the future as I grow as an independent researcher. The experiences have also provided me with opportunities to engage myself within scholarly communities and make impactful

contributions to research, regardless of discipline.

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Learning Through Interaction

As the world around us is becoming more and more interconnected and as we are trying to build a *global village*, the need for individuals with global citizenship skills is at its very greatest. Having lived through over four years of study abroad experience, I can tell with a bit more certainty that understanding cultural diversity, envisioning an ideal diverse culture, and fostering an atmosphere for cultural growth are essential components of creating a global community. Now whenever I think about global citizenship, words that come to my mind are *diversity*, *multilingualism*, and *mutual respect*. In reality, none of these words have any significance unless one interacts, explores, accepts, and adapts to cultural diversity. As an international student, I have developed my global citizenship skills in a number of ways, including the classroom with Honors [World History](#), [Honors Japanese American Internment Camp](#) and through applying those skills outside the classroom by interacting with people around the campus, conducting overseas [research in Germany](#), and [working the within Mankato community](#). I believe that to be a model global citizen, one needs to explore and embrace cultural diversity, and develop competence in a foreign language by learning and interacting with a diverse group of individuals.



As the world around us is becoming more and more interconnected, the requirement for individuals with conscious knowledge of cultural diversity is increasing dramatically. Therefore, gaining first hand experience with cultural diversity is a must. Having a better understanding of my own culture has allowed me to acknowledge other cultures as well. Coming from a country where more than hundred ethnic and minority groups exist has allowed me to show appreciation towards others' beliefs, ideologies, and behaviors, which in turn have provided me with the necessary skills to develop my interpersonal skills and to effectively communicate with my peers, and teachers in the United States. In classes like Honors History and Honors Japanese American Internment Camp, I have explored diversity from various perspectives starting from my familiar territory of the Indian sub-continent to completely new and unknown topics to me like slavery in the colonial United States and the internment camps during WWII. While taking these classes, I learned about issues like gender discrimination, racial discrimination, and intercultural conflict, which have allowed me to address these issues on a broader context and come up with ideas to resolve these problems in systematic ways. Therefore, exploring and adapting to cultural diversity is necessary in order to gain a solid foundation of global citizenship.

I also believe that learning a foreign language is a very important aspect of global citizenship. It allows us to better appreciate a culture and its beliefs. Being a non-native English speaker, everyday has been a challenge for me over the past four years. It has been frustrating at times but I have quickly realized that there is nothing as pleasing as effectively communicating with native English speakers. Moreover, it has allowed me to step inside the mind of a new culture, to compare different cultures across the world, and finally to create a bridge between cultural. Therefore, learning a foreign language can help us to emerge as a true global citizen.

Cultural diversity occupies a significant portion of my core philosophy as a model citizen. It allows me to appreciate others and broaden my understanding about the world in which we live. I think that exploring and accepting cultural differences, and learning foreign languages can help us overcome socio-economical, political, and emotional barriers and create a true global village we

hoped for as the citizens of the world.

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